



Department for Communities
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
County Antrim
BT2 7EG

Submitted via email to: prs@communities-ni.gov.uk

26th March 2026

Dear Department for Communities

Re: Consultation on Notice to Quit Periods

Due to pressure of time and workload the Women's Regional Consortium are unable to complete a full response to the Department's consultation on Notice to Quit Periods. We wish to endorse the Housing Rights response to this consultation and support the following points that Housing Rights have made in relation to the proposals:

- We welcome the proposed introduction of extended notice periods as an important addition to renters' rights in Northern Ireland. This helps to provide better security of tenure and give tenants more time to find alternative accommodation on receipt of a notice to quit from their landlord.
- We share the concerns raised by Housing Rights about the proposals to introduce four new exceptions to the extended notice periods (Special Cases). These will allow landlords to service a notice to quit for a shorter period of time than the newly lengthened minimum notice periods. The notice periods proposed in each Special Case represent a reduction in tenant's rights.
- We are especially concerned that in some cases these reduced notice periods will have a disproportional impact on Section 75 groups and are likely to increase the risk of homelessness. These risks are not adequately considered or mitigated within the consultation document.
- We strongly support Housing Rights in their assertion that under no circumstances is it appropriate to reduce a notice period to just two weeks. This would reduce a tenant's ability to source advice and information and limit the time the NI Housing Executive have to carry out the necessary homelessness assessments. In relation to issues of Anti-Social Behaviour or Criminality it is very concerning given the complexities around these cases. It also runs counter to the policy intent of both the Homelessness and Housing

Supply Strategies both of which are geared towards supporting homelessness prevention and intervention.

- While the draft regulations provide tenants with a right to challenge a Special Case Notice to Quit they make no provision for new or accessible justice routes. We support the Housing Rights view that the threshold of evidence required when seeking a reduced Notice to Quit period is inadequate in each of the Special Cases and share their concern that under the proposed legislation that tenants are being actively disadvantaged in resolving disputes or accessing justice.
- We share Housing Rights opposition to rent arrears as a reason for shorter notice periods. Rents across Northern Ireland have surged over the past five years in every council area, by an average of 51% and people are now spending a larger portion of their income on rent than ever before - from 27.6% in 2020 to about 32.2% now.¹ This means that vulnerable households are more likely to end up in arrears and are more likely to be affected by affordability and access challenges. We agree with Housing Rights that under the current proposals, reduced notice periods for rent arrears have the potential to significantly increase the risk of lower-income households experiencing homelessness and destitution.
- As Housing Rights have stated the proposed Special Case in relation to substantial arrears of rent may have the adverse effect of driving tenants into debt. We know from our work with women that increased pressure on their household budgets can lead them to expensive and sometimes dangerous forms of credit including doorstep and paramilitary lending.²
- We fully support the recommendations made by Housing Rights including:
 - The introduction of an adequate, free at the point of access, dispute resolution service for private tenants.
 - **Special Case – Substantial Arrears of Rent** – extend the threshold for enacting this exception from two months of arrears to three months of arrears and extending the proposed Notice to Quit periods for this exception from four weeks to eight weeks. We strongly support the Housing Rights call for the Department to conduct an assessment of the impact of this exception on vulnerable groups (particularly women) due to their increased reliance on Universal Credit and the impact it is likely to have on accruing arrears (latest Universal Credit Claimant Statistics show that 59% of claimants are female and 41% of claimants are male, November 2025).³
 - **Special Case – Anti-Social Behaviour** – ensure that no tenant will be disadvantaged by these exceptions by reducing the minimum notice period they are entitled to under current regulations. As suggested by Housing Rights, at the very least the minimum should be to amend the Notice to Quit period to a minimum four-week notice.
 - **Special Case – Relevant Criminal Offence** – ensure that no tenant will be disadvantaged by these exceptions by reducing the minimum notice period they are entitled to under current regulations. As suggested by Housing Rights, at the very least the minimum should be to amend the Notice to Quit period to a minimum four-week notice.

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c7vq3135p32o>

² <https://www.womensregionalconsortiumni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Women-Living-with-Debt-1.pdf>

³ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/universal-credit-statistics-november-2025>

- **Special Case – Occupation by a Landlord or a Landlord’s family** – amend the regulation to stipulate that a statement of evidence is required from the landlord to document why they or a family member needs to live in the property.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Siobhán Harding". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Siobhán Harding
Research & Policy Officer, Women’s Regional Consortium